



# THE PLEDGE OF ALAST

*By Mufti Abdullah Moolla*



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When your Rabb extracted from the backs of the children of Ādam their descendants and called them to witness over themselves saying, ‘Am I not your Rabb?’ They replied, ‘Certainly, we testify to it.’ So that you do not say on the day of Qiyāmah, ‘Indeed we were unaware of this.’ [Sūrah Al-A’rāf: 172]

Ḥujjat-ul-Islām Mawlānā Qāsim Nānotwī rahimahullāh has explained that the objective of studying the basics of a science or field is not to fully encompass and grasp the entire subject, with its characteristics and specialities. The objective is to build the capacity and ability that will serve as a foundation to seek knowledge in future. For example, learning the letters ‘alif’, ‘hā’ etc. is not that a person remembers his days as he learnt them or the script of the letters, but the objective of this basic and primary education is simply to recognize the letters, even if the mind of the person does not ever turn in the direction of the one who taught him those letters later on in his or her life. If the education of a child begins at a very early stage, then there are very few, or, practically none that remember when or under whom he or she learnt the basic Arabic alphabet, how to recite the Noble Qur’ān and in what environment he or she did so. In fact, he or she will never think of the teacher who taught him the recognition of the letters, but the effect of that learning will remain forever.

In the same way, the objective of the pledge of Alast, as described in the Noble Qur'ān (and quoted above), is not to recall, remember or recollect the lesson imparted or the environment in which it was taken, but the objective was to build ability and capacity within the human being that when there is an external or internal invitation and call to believe in this matter – which is beyond normal comprehension – then the nature of a person will be pulled and inclined towards it. It is for this reason that the question does not arise often when the pledge was taken, why do people not remember it? So, what was the benefit of it?

Imām Sha'rānī raḥimahullāh says that what is so surprising if a person does not remember the pledge he or she gave in the realm of the souls, as he came through many generations and he went through various stages in his own creation, from a drop of sperm to a blood clot, to a piece of flesh, then it was clothed with bones and vital organs etc. Despite all of this, it is reported that great luminaries like Sayyidunā 'Alī raḍiyallāhu 'anhū and Sahl Ibn 'Abdullāh Tastarī raḥimahullāh had remembered the pledge of Alast in their lifetime in this world.

There were many other great pious luminaries that remembered the pledge they made too, based on the purity of their hearts and souls.

Nevertheless, this brilliant explanation gives us a clearer understanding of the concept of the Alast pledge that every human being gave to Allāh Ta'ālā in the realm of souls. Moreover, we realize that in every human being, there is a natural capacity to accept the truth, and this has been placed in them by Allāh Ta'ālā. No matter how much the atheist will try,

no matter how much he will deny, the fact is that in the deepest corner of his heart, the ability to accept the truth lies there, his mind seems to battle his heart, making him feel superficially correct and comfortable. Nevertheless, the moment must hit him sooner or later, when he attests to the fact that definitely he is the creation of Allāh Ta'ālā. Even the most hardcore atheist knows that he can never suppress or totally remove the ingrained ability and capacity within him.

Source:

Tarjumān-us-Sunnah vol.1 pp. 252-253